Today was a fairy tale

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Today was a fairy tale

by EarthsickWithoutYou

Summary

Will is a poor boy with dreams of grand adventure who lives in a cottage near the darkly mysterious forest with his mean, neglectful father. One snowy night, he is rescued by a stunning, sleek silver wolf, and afterwards he and the wolf form a special friendship. When Will runs headlong into danger again, his dear wolf comes to help, but his savior looks a little different this time...

Notes

The story contains mythology elements inspired by Maggie Stiefvater's *Shiver*.

There is knotting, but it is not Omegaverse; Nigel is a werewolf and Will is human.

See the end of the work for more notes

... Can you feel this magic in the air?
It must have been the way you kissed me
Fell in love when I saw you standing there
It must have been the way
Today was a fairytale
-Taylor Swift

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The woods were dark as blood, deeper than death and possessed unseen teeth. Even the children were wise enough never to venture there at night.

But Will was no longer a child.

Preacher Chilton had warned the villagers that when autumn began to fade to winter, the evils hiding between the tall, gnarled trees would increase in number.

He believed the deaths of numerous travelers over the years, which had been much worse than normal this year, were a direct result of the sins committed by those who were chewed up by the forest and spat out onto the ground.

But Will thought it was rather funny, that Preacher Chilton talked about the forest as if it was a monster, sent by a wrathful God to purge the world in a bloody gush.

Will had been regularly skipping Sunday services for weeks, slipping away before his father could catch him by the scruff of his collar and drag him into the small wooden cart that served as their transport to the village.

Waiting behind bushes and up in trees, Will would watch his father curse (improper, especially on a Sunday) and get in the cart by himself, their old mare reluctantly setting off towards the little collection of buildings a few miles hence which served as a village, barely enough to be called much of anything.

Wasn't God the one who said killing was a sin? Wasn't it Preacher Chilton who told Will he was a foolish and inattentive boy who never paid him mind in church, and who should beg this God for forgiveness?

Will thought it would be rather hypocritical of a God who loved all of mankind to slaughter anyone, and for victims, wouldn't the Almighty then have to rely on whoever happened to pass through the woods at night? Surely not all such travelers deserved to die – most were either lost or rebelling against the warnings to prove their own bravery, which was foolish, but not sinful.

The latter reasoning did somewhat explain why Will ventured into the woods on the morning of his eighteenth birthday. It was hours before his father would rise, which made it almost still night. Will liked this strange, misty in-between time which belonged to no particular name. He envied it, perhaps, and wished to hide in it for a while.

His father called him a careless and selfish disappointment, which Will thought depended on one's point of view, specifically to what extent heavy farm labor and exhausting housework should be demanded of a young boy. How much abuse should such a boy suffer via the backhanded slaps and words colder than the bitterest snap these woods ever twitched under?

If Careless and Selfish and Foolish he was, so be it; Will was also going to do as he liked. The impulse was a strange one for a boy in his position, who had never been told he'd amount to much. Like the village, he was to many minds a nobody from nowhere or worse, now a heathen from nowhere – the notoriety a helpful subject for gossip, but no recommendation of Will's character if anyone should ask.

Yet this new boldness had begun as a seedling in him which time had slowly nurtured until now, he was a reckless young thing. It was a crisp, bracing October, though not freezing cold, and Will enjoyed walking through the woods, especially because he was wearing his hooded crimson cape.

The velvet cape was a beautiful one, and the only nice thing Will owned in the world. He had come to have it in a deceptive and manipulative way, which was also the only time he'd ever acted in such a manner. He could hardly believe himself as he was doing it, and then it was over, and the sin made him feel so shockingly invigorated, the guilt of theft and lying became a more distant concern.

Apprenticed to the tailor Jack Crawford, who with his wife, Bella, resided in the small cottage under the oak trees and just above the valley with the nut trees, Will had been a digilent, hard worker since he had earned the unlikely and highly promising job.

It did not pay, of course, but once a master tailor himself, Will might make his own money, and find his own way in this world. It was hardly an opportunity he ought to sully with any misdeeds, and he was a common- sensical lad in his own peculiar way. He did not care to follow rules if they seemed pointless, like the hurtful ones his father imposed or the fire and brimstone from Preacher Chilton's pulpit.

But Jack was kinder than either of them and while a bit stern on account of having more orders than he ever seemed to have time or materials to work on, long days spent on intricate stitching, cutting, and embroidery in the quiet cottage were paradise compared to Will's own home.

Bella Crawford would make tea and give him cookies in the morning; more tea with sandwiches for lunch, simple, precious luxuries, the kindness perhaps most of all. Will never would have done a wrong thing in the Crawford's home if it were not for that cape.

It was long, covering Will down to the tops of his brown, worn-out boots, and vibrant, a shade of ruby velvet which stood out against night or day as if it was something Other, striking a bold stamp of passion across the dull world. The material was so soft, sensuous, warm but not heavy, and he looked well in it.

One day, when Jack gave him the project and materials, for they were to make three such capes for young girls who lived in the village, Will tried the cape on just for a lark while alone for a little while. He saw a new version of himself in the glass, a pale, daring boy with

dark, glossy chestnut curls, big blue eyes nearly as vivid as the cape's red, and a lithe, well-formed body full of unspoken desires, not all of which he understood. He knew he would learn, and he felt ready.

The cape belonged to him, he knew it. So he did the unthinkable and finished the last stitching in just such a way that it came out crooked, which Jack could see and would never try to sell to a paying customer, though no one else outside the trade was likely to notice the error. Cleverly, surprised at how clever he was when doing wrong (while, trying to be extra good, he often found himself fumbling and awkward), Will made the cape's tiny mistake so that it could not be fixed again. The cape would never be perfect.

Jack sighed heavily, and after briefly scolding Will for carelessness, told him to have this cape for himself if he liked, since it was useless to anyone with coin to spend. Will had to pretend he was only casually pleased, but he was elated. He wore the cape every day, and people said he was a scandalous boy for skipping church and going where he pleased wearing that scarlet, hooded cloak that practically said he was looking for trouble in the right bed, anytime someone wanted to ask.

Will only liked the cape because of how special it made him feel, how good, and how beautiful it was, how precious indeed to have a fine possession for one's very own which no one could take.

Today, he was bringing some supplies to Jack and Bella, going straight through the woods, a faster path to the Crawfords' cottage than going around the forest, but a path that left him vulnerable to the various malicious energies and claws the villagers believed were waiting therein.

How silly. Will hoisted the heavy basket higher on the crook of his arm, noticing he'd overpacked it, between haste and the small guilt, if not regret, over his recent sin of stealing the cloak. In addition to the sewing work and supplies, he had put in fresh-baked muffins, a wedge of cheese and a loaf of bread, realizing in the process he would have given almost anything to keep the cape, even if it meant his soul was condemned to hell. However, he was perfectly willing to try and make up for the theft of Jack's expensive, luxurious materials, as best he could.

The woods were not evil, or did not contain any evil he had seen, only miles of wild quiet, babbling brooks, lovely flowers, sweet grass and animals darting to and fro.

Will was not entirely sure that the Preacher's tales of bloody murder in the woods were true, but if they were, he was more the sort of boy to walk into danger, seeking solace within the dark and unknown, than to hide in the plain, dull world which shunned him.

He only felt at peace out there, which might seem strange given that he was always alone. But he was alone in his life at any rate, aside from a few friends in the village whose parents had since told them to stay away from the loose, awful boy in the harlot's cloak, lest his sin spread to them like the plague.

The Crawfords never heeded common gossip, and nor did his former schoolmistress, Miss Bloom. Too many others took the Preacher at his mean-spirited word.

But in the woods, Will wasn't always alone. Here, only on rare occasions, he had seen the most stunning, silver-grey wolf.

Last winter, Will got his boot stuck in the snow returning home from a stolen jaunt far too late to be safe, for the night was ruthlessly cold. He did not know how he would get out or survive the freezing conditions, and in a terrible panic, expected to die by morning. But suddenly, the wolf was there, giving him a rather accusing look that startled Will, coming from an animal. The wolf had deep, honey-amber eyes, intelligent, deliberate, yet often soft when they fell on Will.

Chiding him with these looks and then quiet snarls, the wolf pulled away the packed, dense, almost frozen snow with his strong paws, and then after freeing him, nuzzled gently into the haphazard petting of his soft fur which the boy bestowed.

"T-thank you," Will breathed, teeth chattering, staring into the wolf's golden eyes and then admiring his stealthy, powerful form, larger than any wolf he'd ever heard of. The silver fur was such a shade as the finest jewelry, not a mere shining grey, and though snow-speckled, was the nicest thing Will had ever touched, so that he wanted to go on and on.

The wolf felt warm despite the frigid night, and it was almost as if they knew one another. The confusing, fantastic, quite impossible sensation rang through Will like a bell of perfect clarity, but the next day he would awaken to realize he must have been half out of his mind with near-freezing.

Perhaps a daze had possessed him, and there had not been this gorgeous, rescuing wolf. Or he was afraid to believe it had been real, because he wanted to see the wolf again and always. Knew it would make him feel safe and in good company for once.

However, the memory of the wolf giving him again that exasperated glance and huffing at Will's excessive, fascinating petting, nudging his lovely warm face against Will's hand in his tattered little gloves just one more time, before pushing against him, made Will question if it really had been a dream.

The wolf had truly pushed him away at last, and if eyes could talk, if puffs of white-cold breath could spell words on air, the wolf was certainly calling him a naughty boy and telling him to go home before he froze despite the creature's efforts to save him.

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Since then, Will had only seen the wolf a few times, always on bitter cold days or nights, and never if Will tried to track the creature to his home or call to him. He stopped doing those rituals which had been a habit during the first weeks after the snowy rescue, and then the wolf would be there occasionally, simply watching him between the trees.

The wolf would come to Will if the boy crouched down and extended a hand, and again Will would pet him and speak softly to him, now able to speak much more.

The boy did not mind at all sitting on the cold ground and getting himself wet and dirty, for then the wolf put his face in Will's lap contentedly, and Will told him everything. All about

his life and his dreams, and how he wanted to find adventure, a place in the world for himself full of happiness, beauty and love.

And after a while, the wolf would again rise on its elegant legs and nudge Will's knee in a clear message to go now, for that was all the time they had together today.

This did not happen nearly as often as Will craved for it, the feeling of the feathery-light, but thick silver fur under his fingers, the softness of the wolf's warm breath on his hands, the rise and fall of that breathing, slow, soothing. The companionship and bonding, the lack of judgment, the sinking into comfort, sitting on the cold, rough ground where he felt they might have stayed so forever without either minding.

But contriving never made the wolf appear, and when the snow melted, Will wondered if the animal had gone on to live someplace new. He never saw his wolf anymore once the spring, then the even more unwanted summer arrived, and became miserable, perhaps accounting for the extra recklessness of his behavior lately, getting more so the longer he waited for his wolf, impatient.

Part of Will thought if he was naughty enough, the wolf might come back, to scold him with his eyes again or save him from whatever scrape he might fall into. But it did not happen one day, and then it did not happen the next. And finally Will was naughty enough to ruin and steal the cape.

It was almost as nice to touch and have on his skin as the wolf, but not quite. Somehow, the cloak and the rebellion it symbolized were Will's beacon call to his animal companion, however hopeless it might be. He could keep waiting for as long as he had to; the wolf perhaps underestimated his stubbornness. And pray tell what else had he to do in his life of endless longing? At least this kept him feeling alive.

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This morning, the wolf did not appear; it was a warm day, so Will had only the smallest, vague notion it was even possible – unsure if the wolf stayed away because he traveled someplace else in the warm months, or if Will had done something wrong to offend the creature. He had drafted several careful apologies in case this was the reason, but without knowing why he might have offended, it was difficult to make any sound as nice as he meant them to.

He did have a sixth sense of some sort, a heightened ability to sense the emotions of others; sometimes it felt like reading minds. And he knew the wolf could understand him when he spoke, as clearly as Will understood the wolf's own language of nudges, nuzzles and changes in his expressive face.

Father said Will was always doing something wrong, so he knew it was a possibility he had bothered his wolf by accident, somehow; he was apparently doing wrong all the time without even meaning to or knowing it. It was a wonder he had wrested any of his understanding away from the strict rules of his upbringing, but the sadness about his own "bad" nature remained, deep down, where Will could not reach it to offer any comfort or change.

The only one who did appear, aside from Will and the usual, smaller animals and butterflies, was a tall stranger with greying blonde hair and a roguish smirk that immediately annoyed the boy.

“Good day, Little Red Riding Hood,” said the stranger, a man perhaps twenty years older than Will, with tanned skin, a ruggedly powerful physique, and Trouble writ clear across his admittedly handsome features.

“Thank you kindly, stranger,” Will said flatly, rolling his eyes.

The stranger fell into step with him, to Will’s further irritation. No doubt, from how he smiled with such mischief and would not take his gaze from Will the whole time they walked, with Will in sullen silence, struggling to keep hold of the heavy basket, the man was up to no good. A nuisance, more than a danger; for some reason Will did not feel afraid of the irritating vagrant, even for a moment.

“Whither away so early, Little Red Riding Hood?” The stranger asked with a teasing look. The audacity!

“To my employer, Mr. Crawford’s workshop to start my labors, if you must know.”

“Oh! And what have you in your basket there, darling?”

“I was willing to let ‘Little Red Riding Hood’ go, merely in the hope that you would soon be gone, but ‘darling’?” Will stopped short, haughty, but the effect of his studied disdain was damaged by the basket suddenly giving way.

The bottom of the meek, old device simply fell out, and along with it, the neatly packaged supplies plummeted to the leaf-strewn earth with an embarrassing clunk.

“Let me help you, my sweet beauty,” flirted the ridiculous stranger.

He wore a working man’s attire, simple and efficient, typical for men thereabouts, merely a plain grey shirt and tan trousers with suspenders, but it looked uncommonly well on his figure, especially considering that the clothing looked old and faded.

It would not do for a decent young man such as Will to allow his eyes to linger with interest upon the low neck of his – no – this stranger’s shirt, where a broad, hairy chest was partly visible, nor to gaze at the adorably slight softness in the man’s belly, and his attractively small waist, complimented by a shapely ass and long legs.

Even so, it was hardly Will’s fault if the ruffian’s attire left little to the imagination!

The way that the tight trousers stretched across the stranger’s groin was a matter of no interest whatsoever to Will, who therefore cleared his throat and looked at the trees as sweat prickled all over his brow.

Had Will’s favorite red cloak always kept him quite this warm?

There were small rips here and there all over the stranger's outfit (not, of course, that Will looked at it again), which was bizarre as well. The man had the confident, dashing elegance of someone who was quite educated, but the rough look of a peasant.

Will had been frozen in place like an awkward ninny for nearly a full minute, not staring at the stranger, by the time he remembered that he'd dropped all of the supplies on the ground, and the stranger, while looking just a bit too amused at Will's not-staring, had bent to assist him in cleaning it up.

"Oh, damn it, you've done enough," Will fretted, cheeks now matching his cloak as he sank to his knees and hurriedly gathered the fabric, buttons, and other items knowing there was no place to put them now, but too prideful to do anything else at the moment.

"Curses, from that innocent, soft mouth?" The man chuckled, the sound husky, sending a shiver down Will's spine. He had the most melodious, throaty tone with a silky, exotic accent. "I'm shocked. I wonder what you might say if I were to be really impertinent."

"I doubt you want to know. Now will you be gone?"

"Can't I help you, if it is my fault you dropped your charming basket, darling?"

"Your brazen flirtations are hardly appropriate, sir."

"Nigel will do, angel. Please, now, let me help you."

Will finally met this Nigel's gaze full-on, with the strangely reluctant plan of ordering the rascal to leave him alone forever more, when he noticed the golden-amber eyes looking at him with deep recognition and affection, attraction, even worship. None other ever looked at Will in such a way.

The man's hair, which he had thought grey with a fast glance, was silver, that one particular shade of silver that painted many of Will's happier dreams.

"Wait." Will sat on the ground and stared, astonished. "Don't I…know you from someplace, Nigel?"

"How could that be possible, darling? I only wish we were acquainted, but it's never too late, you know." He turned pink in the face himself and began rummaging through crispy orange and red leaves, pushing them aside carefully to extricate the boy's things. "I have a toolbox here; you may have it, since I caused such a mess."

The older man scrambled away as if nervous suddenly, ever since the boy seemed to recognize him. He picked up the metal box from the ground behind a nearby felled tree, then unceremoniously emptied out all the hammers, wrenches and whatnot right on the ground. He brought the toolbox to Will with a courtly little bow.

"Won't you please avail yourself, pretty Red Riding Hood?"

Will gazed upon him sharply. How absurd, to scatter his own tools on the ground like that, trying to please Will; yet the gesture was endearing.

“If you will avail yourself of my further acquaintance, since you seemed so desirous of doing so.”

“Very well.” Nigel handed Will the box, and the boy stood still, watching him intently as the man filled it with the items strewn on the forest floor. “I think I have almost everything now. Oh, are those muffins? They smell so good.”

The man’s nostrils flared and his eyes sparkled, and Will knew Nigel was not smelling the blueberry pastries at all, but him.

“Tell me the truth, right now,” Will demanded. “You don’t ask my name, despite giving all of these ridiculous little titles to me – as if you already know who I am. You’re a cocky sort of man, yet for some reason you keep getting anxious in my presence, the more I give you the very attention you requested so uncouthly.”

“Was it uncouth? I’m afraid I’m not very fucking couth, darling, in general – oh, I’m sorry for the cursing, case in point, I suppose.”

He was very handsome indeed, funny, and sweet. Will smothered a smile and answered directly, brooking no refusal, “Tell me. Who are you? Have we met?”

“I’m Nigel,” he said again with a shrug. “I work around here as a handyman, wandering from place to place, doing odd jobs. Nothing special.”

“Perhaps, but that isn’t all. Do you know that I have heard legends of men who turn to wolves at night beneath a full moon, and become human again at daybreak?”

“Do you actually believe in such silly, childish tales?” Nigel was now twisting his hands together, even more nervous, but he forced a choked laugh.

Will put the toolbox down, then put both of his smaller, paler hands over those of the older man, who had rough and able, big hands trembling in his gentle yet implicit touch.

“I do. Don’t you know I’ve been seeking you most urgently these past several months? Why did you not come to me sooner with the truth?”

“What truth?” Nigel stared down at their joined hands in the flesh, entranced.

“The truth that you are one of these…man-wolves, or werewolves, I’ve heard them called. You’re man, and beast, subject to shift form when the moon compels you, isn’t that right?”

“I was going to explain it in time,” Nigel groaned. “I thought you would run away from me if I came out with it directly. And…Will. It’s not an easy thing to tell someone. I stayed away because I can’t shift form to full wolf in the warm months. Only when it is cold. It has nothing to do with the bloody moon in our case. Or that is, me and my pack.”

“Your pack?” Will repeated, clinging faster to Nigel’s warm, strong hands, feeling anchored to the world with purpose for the first time in ages.

Nigel kept hold of Will as well, with one hand; with the other, he reached out slowly and lowered the boy's velvet hood, sucking in a breath at the sight of his face and hair, his ears, his neck, any detail his eyes could take in.

"Gabi. Darko. Charlie. The other wolf-folk, as you say. They have been angry with me, I can tell you, first for interfering with a human's destiny by saving you, then for spending all that time with you, letting you see me so often. We are supposed to hide away from humans immediately when in wolf form. Other than taking work, we avoid your kind in general, even when we pass for human. It's unheard of for us to form friendships, or more, with…with, you…"

"You failed at following that rule, rather admirably." Will smiled and turned his face into the warm cupping of Nigel's hand, their fingers now stroking each other slowly between them. "All for me?"

"Yes. I'd do anything for you, my beautiful Little Red Riding Hood. You can't imagine how fucking – sorry – how dreadfully wild you make me feel…"

The naughty word sounded enticing on his tongue, and Will felt warm, soft and open all over, like a red rose standing before the sun.

"I came today because I'm worried, Will. I could always make you safe in the woods before, but some maniac has been wreaking bloody havoc. For years, this beast would come and go, getting away before we could end him. He's learned to avoid us in the winter, or this would have been over long ago. Now he's gone and made himself more fucking —sorry, more obvious, by killing too often, getting out of control."

"Preacher says it's our sin, and the sins of the travelers, making these folk die in the woods," Will said grimly. "I knew he was lying."

"You're damn right he was lying, the corrupt bastard. The beast even killed my own packmate, Charlie, who was a fu– a useless idiot, but still. Charlie was ripped to shreds by this wretched fuc– this creature, while in human form. And if it can take one of my brethren so easily, I can't have you in the woods. The beast grows sloppy now, it won't be long before I get him, and then I can find you again."

"Let me help you, then," Will suggested, "We can find the fiend together and put it down, keep the woods safe, and then you can take me away someplace and tell me all about yourself from the beginning."

"What, darling?" Nigel's thumb rubbed methodical circles against Will's jaw, but he tried to be sensible. "You know I can't put you in that kind of danger."

"Well, then how am I to know you are safe, all the while? You expect me to sit around waiting to learn of your fate? And then, if you come to harm because I was not there to help, we will not have the opportunity for better acquaintance, and my wolf, it is not fair that you know every single thought or dream I ever had, while all I know about you I have scraped together from the barest morsels you've been willing to toss me."

Will spoke with a certain adorable scold and a pink flush in his face that made him almost impossible to say no to.

“I can’t let you near –” Nigel scowled, trying to boss Will about; his fiery gaze softened helplessly at the answering blaze in the boy’s own eyes.

“Please!” Suddenly, a young woman around Will’s age, with long auburn hair swinging all around her, bolted into the clearing where the two men stood. Her clothes were in worse shape than Nigel’s, chest heaving with terror. “You must save me, a dreadful beast has found me and is giving chase!”

“Of course,” Will exclaimed, although his heart was in his throat. “This must be the beast who has been killing others here in the woods. We will help in any way, right, Nigel?”

Fear stabbed the heart in his throat, instinctively, as it must when he was told a ruthless killing beast was so nearby, but his dear wolf was there, too. Will knew he could not be better protected, and this bolstered his bravery.

“Wrong.” Nigel crossed his arms, biceps flexing under the thin material of his flimsy shirt. “I’ve seen this girl before, and always just before or after a body turns up. She’s bait. You’re the food in the trap, aren’t you, Miss…?”

She hesitated, shocked to be accused, unable to help a guilty, small gasp.

“Miss Hobbs. Abigail Hobbs.” Will stepped closer to the girl, who now seemed more frightened than anything. “You were at school with me once, years ago. Then disappeared one day without explanation.”

“Will?” She stared at him, and when Will nodded, she gulped. “My father took me away. Since then, he’s been teaching me, wanting me to join him in his wicked plans…I’m so sorry…” She started to cry. “He made me help him. I thought he might kill me if I did not.”

“I understand you had no choice,” Nigel said in a hurried panic for Will’s safety, if the father should be nearby. “What is your father, Abigail?”

“A simple woodsman,” she wept, “Only a man…”

“Yet a truer monster than any we have spoken of today, my love,” Will murmured to Nigel, who, though distracted with tense protectiveness, shivered in bliss at the romantic words.

The Woodsman, bearing an ax and with his clothing torn and filthy, the look upon his face ghastly and vacant, emerged then, the weapon held high as his daughter screamed, “run!”

She fled as fast as her bare feet could carry her, the skirts of her simple peasant’s dress flouncing around her in the speed of the escape through the morning fog.

Nigel said urgently to Will, “Run, go with her, let me take care of this.”

“Alone? Never,” Will insisted, bold as the red of his cloak.

Nigel was infuriated, but there was no time to argue. The man flew at them with the ax, and Nigel caught the handle in mid-air, for the man was really just a man, and no match for the "handyman" he so wildly attacked.

Hobbs had fooled everyone with his disguise of an unassuming local Woodcutter, but now the veil had fallen, and he hid none of his monstrous nature.

He gave feral fight-back, but Nigel wrenched the bloody ax from his sweaty grip, snarling like the wolf he was inside.

The man made to lunge at Nigel again, holding a knife he had whipped out, but Will ran behind and pinned Hobbs' arms back in a vice grip, surprised at his own strength. The thrill of this vicious, hard battle roared through Will's veins, along with a need to protect his beloved which was every bit as fierce as any wolf could claim.

"Rope! Will, there's rope just there, beside you on the ground - bind his wrists quickly," Nigel urged.

Will disposed of the knife and tied Hobbs up as he'd been told. He backed up, having an inkling of what his wolf intended.

Since Hobbs was restrained, it took only one calculated, clean swipe of the ax for Nigel to behead him. Will fell backwards into the leaves and stared in fascinated horror as Hobbs' head flew across the clearing, spraying blood in its wake that splattered Will's face and hands.

He realized he had fallen into a crouch, like an animal predator, already mirroring the ways of his lover, his partner in this righteous hunt.

Nigel swore profusely, sweating and panting, then dropped the ax, ran to Will and collapsed beside him. He took Will into his arms and cradled him close, scolding him angrily for disobeying his orders and putting himself in terrible danger when Nigel could have handled it himself. And telling Will he was the bravest, most beautiful boy in the world, of course.

"You love me, then?" Will asked in amazement, dizzy from the unbelievable events still sinking into his mind as reality.

"I love you, my darling, yes, more than anything!"

Nigel's heart sped thunderously, pressed so close to Will's own. Will looked up at him and cried softly, "You mustn't ever leave me again, Nigel. Swear you won't do that to me."

"You're all I want in the whole world, my Little Red Riding Hood," Nigel said, both of them laughing gently as their tears fell and mixed, leaving trails in dirty and blood-covered skin. "But what can we do? You're human, and I'm…more wolf than man, if it comes down to saying."

"Good. I love you the way you are, my wolf. My Nigel. You must say you will be mine. Please?"

“You command me to be yours, then beg it? Incredible, Will. How can you be so intolerably fucking naughty and wonderfully sweet, then innocent all at once? Oh, I’m sorry for –”

“Cursing?” Will smirked, “And if I don’t forgive you?”

He leaned up to steal a kiss but Nigel said anxiously, “I’m too old for you, darling. Look at you, you might have anyone, someone young and vital like yourself…”

“I’m of age now, today, in fact, and it is for me to decide who to bestow my heart upon. Not even you may tell me to give it to some other, boring person who I do not know and who can never know me. You think yourself…less than vital?” He made an amusingly doubtful face. “After what I just saw…”

“It’s your birthday, Will, really?” Nigel hugged him tightly and kissed his forehead adoringly.

Warm lips and rough stubble made Will’s skin tingle, his whole being awash with joy. He clung to his wolf and said emphatically, “Yes, it is. And I know what I want for a birthday present. For you to take me away with you, marry me, carry me off. I mean it. Please, now, tonight. If you love me as I love you.”

“But Will…the season already deepens and the nights grow colder…when winter comes, I won’t be in human form again till April, perhaps. What will you do?”

“What will I do? What I have been waiting to do since you left me, silly. I’ll love you. I shall sit on a rug before the fire in our snug little home, and your head shall be right in my lap where it belongs. Then will I stroke your lovely fur and sing you songs, if a bit off-key, though you must pretend to believe it is perfect…”

Nigel laughed tearfully.

“And I shall tell you wonderful stories, and you will nuzzle into me and we will love one another in our own special, quiet, cozy way. Do you think I could stand to be parted from you, merely because you are in one form or another? The moment I saw your eyes and knew you were my own wonderful, beloved wolf, I fell even deeper, knowing you are the very same, one and the same. The one for me.”

“I…I want that, so, so much, darling…my pretty rosebud, my Will…” More freely, now, he kissed Will’s face, his cheeks, his forehead, both flushed and yearning for more.

“Have you a place?”

“Yes, I…it…I believed it a foolish fantasy, but I found a cottage, not here but not terribly far. And it was just a ramshackle, abandoned shell, but I rebuilt it and made it over, to be a snug, cozy home for you and me, just as you said. It is like you knew, my love. But how could that be?”

“I don’t know, I don’t need to know,” Will smiled, sighing. Nigel was so close, he could feel the older man’s breath on his sensitive skin. “Just take me, for I am yours, and is it not, then, only right for you to do so?”

“I…should admit that I’m not so concerned about our ages, as I am about the wolf side of me that comes out during…the act of love, darling. I may have overstated my worries about other things, because it’s so hard to explain this part to you. I’m not used to being so nervous, you know.”

“What do you mean?” Will smiled, in a lazy overabundance of petted, kissed, hugged happiness which he never wanted to end. To encourage his love’s full honesty, he leaned up at last and brushed their mouths together, immediately moaning at Nigel’s passionate response.

The older man kissed Will with everything he had, softly wanting, then the ardor built sharply and he tumbled the boy underneath him, pinning his wrists to the hard earth, growling at Will’s small whimpers of “Please,” not intended to beg Nigel to stop, but quite the opposite.

Nigel claimed Will’s lips again and again, holding him firmly down as the kisses became harder, bolder, wet with their tongues moving together. Will learned how to kiss right that second, from Nigel, since it was his first time. He felt himself burning up with sensations that tormented and delighted him, and that he was getting too hard now, biting his lip, arching his hips into Nigel’s teasing brushes against his body, almost grinding down. Not quite.

“Tell me. What happens when you make love, my wolf?”

Nigel growled again, softly, his forehead pressed to Will’s. His nails dug into Will’s back beneath the cape, and he said intensely, “I’ll *knot* you if we make love. I won’t be able to help it, because you’re so perfect, so indescribably fucking perfect, my angel, and I’ll…it may hurt you. If you’re in pain when it happens, especially so soon after losing your virginity, you would have to wait for me to be able to withdraw. It can take quite a long time, darling, and I’m terrified of making you suffer like that, perhaps begging me to stop…”

“How soon can you do that to me?” Will asked impetuously, but quite certain of his desires. “I want you, I want you. Everything. Don’t underestimate what I can take. You know better, don’t you, hmm? Husband?”

At the title, Nigel looked scarily possessive under the moonlight; his eyes appeared black, just before he kissed Will even harder and let his bigger body rest against the younger man, feeling at once that Will was true to his word. They were both immensely hard and needy for nothing but each other. Nothing else in the world could satisfy their insatiable craving.

“Husband,” Nigel said at last, licking Will’s mouth wildly, before he made himself stop. “Come with me and we’ll find the nearest preacher who is not named Chilton.”

They joined hands and ran together, Will’s cape billowing around him in the misty day. Nigel led him to a black horse who waited obediently at the other, far edge of the woods. He hoisted Will atop the horse, then sat behind him with a claiming grip on the boy’s waist and hip, hot lips on his neck and ear before they set off.

“Hobbs was eating them, you know.” Nigel hesitated because he wanted Will to know fully what he was choosing.

“You don’t eat people, do you?” Will quirked such a wicked smile at this that Nigel realized, if he said yes, Will really would still adore him.

“No, love, but I’ve torn people to fucking pieces with my teeth. Only if they’ve hurt my pack or innocents like you. Not that there exist other innocents quite like you, my beauty.”

The horse whinnied quietly, and Nigel asked Will, “Raven is eager to be off. Do you understand? I’ve told you my darkest secrets, darling. Do you wish to come with me?”

Will thought, hypnotized by the older man’s woodsy smell, strong, glorious body holding him, and the delightful thrall of true love, Nigel could not have let him go now, for anything. But he tried to convince them both to look before leaping.

“You’re not usually this cautious, are you, my wolf?”

“No,” Nigel laughed, “Never, till you. I’ll leave my packmate Gabi in charge; I can write to her with the news, but I think she already knows. The others listen to her far more than me, ever since some strange, beguiling boy came into my life and distracted me.”

“And Abigail will be safe,” Will said thoughtfully. “I know.”

“She should be back to the village by now, and may find safe quarter…”

“With the schoolmistress, Miss Bloom,” Will answered. “I don’t envy the Preacher his job, should he attempt to intervene with Abigail’s education or her independent streak. Miss Bloom is not so different herself.”

“What of your father?” Nigel inquired, more concerned.

“He never loved me. Now that I feel your love, I know that it is different from anything else I ever knew. Jack Crawford will find a new apprentice, and the Preacher will simply have to manage his disappointment that his favorite scapegoat of sin has fled his clutches.”

“Oh, Will,” Nigel murmured, “You’re to be mine, angel, really and truly?”

“Yes, yes, I always have been, silly wolf. Show me everything you are, tonight. Come, for the villagers will soon hear of my plight and rush to save me from the Huntsman. We do not need their interruptions, not when this is the most perfect day of my life.”

“No, we don’t,” Nigel smiled in pleasure while gently pulling the reins to let Raven know they were to be off. “We don’t need anyone else, darling. You’re all mine and no one else’s.”

And so they left behind them one very exasperated new wolf pack leader, the beheaded remains of the beastly human Huntsman, and the forgotten toolbox of Will’s supplies.

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Thankfully, due to the latch on the box which had been closed before the battle began, the Crawfords discovered the supplies almost fully intact when they went looking for Jack’s

missing apprentice. Even the muffins were still in one piece, but there was a bizarre mess of heavy working man's tools nearby, not to mention the beheaded local farmer.

Quickly piecing together that the Huntsman must be the dreadful killer of the woods, based on small, preserved remains of his victims which formed a grisly collection in his coat pockets, Jack was relieved. At least his young apprentice had gotten away, it seemed, hopefully unharmed.

"But could Will have defeated the Huntsman alone, so easily?" Bella wondered. "And with a beheading, no less?"

"I can't see how," Jack mused, "But there is also the question of who left these other tools behind them. He must have had help. We can hope wherever the lad went, he's safe, and be grateful we can be too, along with the others who live near the woods."

"True. Come, then, husband," Bella smiled, "Before the nosy townspeople arrive to investigate. We shall bring the stranger's tools away, to cover up the boy's escape further."

"You think it unlikely Will was taken against his wishes?"

"Oh, Jack. Would a terrible kidnapper give the boy his own toolbox, dumping out his work tools in the grass like a nervous fool, then forget all of it after the battle? Again, like a distracted idiot who just found their love and planned to run away?"

"You're a hopeless romantic, my dear," Jack sighed. "I shall keep these tools in our shed, in case this stranger turns out to be a villain, and then we may present them as evidence."

"You will never see your apprentice or his stranger again, I think," Bella guessed astutely. "Now, let us hasten – I can hear the horses coming, and the Preacher may be among them…"

"Oh," Jack nodded, hurrying to finish gathering the stranger's tools, placing them in his own box to bring home. "Anything but that. Let us be gone, then."

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Nigel took them away, as promised, and they covered quite a lot of ground by evening. At twilight, several towns away, farther than anyone in Will's village had traveled, Nigel found a little church with a friendly if puzzled preacher who agreed to wed the hasty strangers to one another.

Beforehand, they washed in a river. They weren't much more presentable then, but at least the blood was off their faces and hands. They passed as hunters, quite easily.

In town, they purchased new clothes to be married in. Will insisted upon being married in his red cloak, only changing into a fresh, marvelous, soft white shirt and light trousers which his husband-to-be bought for him, using almost the whole contents of his purse, the funds carefully saved from his various jobs. Nigel had bought a similar outfit for himself, exhausting the rest of the coin, and saying he would have to work again very soon. He could hunt for food, but Will must be spoiled far more than basic creature comforts…

“I’ll work very hard to spoil you, angel, give you more than you could ever want…” Nigel held Will’s hand and walked him to the church, their fingers interlocked as their arms swung merrily.

“I only need you! You need not do any such thing, especially since I can bring in some coin with my tailoring work. But I suppose if you will insist, and if the work is somewhere I can watch you sweating whilst chopping wood or fixing roofs, I must approve the labor.”

“Is that so?” Nigel grinned, showing fangs which indicated his wolfish nature and made Will quiver with delightful anticipation of belonging to his husband in body and soul.

“Yes, it is. Now, let’s make haste to the church, all the sooner to be in our snug, cozy little home.”

It was all they could both do not to run full-force to the church and frighten the poor preacher.

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“It’s perfect,” Will grinned, as Nigel finished carrying him over the threshold of the cottage, then set him down on the floor. “You did a wonderful job restoring the charming, sweet place.”

“I’m so happy you like it, my beauty. Now, come here, you naughty boy, and be good, sit by the fireplace while I make the place warm.”

“You might make me warm yourself, with all due haste,” his husband retorted saucily.

Nigel chuckled. “See what I mean? Utterly troublesome, wily little creature. You’re in the jaws of the beast, and you want me to swallow you whole.”

“As if you desire any other outcome.” Will smiled, very naughty indeed but entirely content. He settled in a soft chair by the fireplace and let Nigel build a nice, glowing, crackling fire for them to make love and sleep by.

Nigel knelt on the floor, slowly untying Will’s boots with great reverence, looking up at him, his chiseled, stunning face overpowered with love and disbelief. “You’ll have to help me decorate. I haven’t done much yet, aside from making it safe, warm and neat.”

“Of course, my wolf. I love it here. It is ours. And now, you’ll show me how much I am yours. Is that not so?” Will raised his eyebrows as Nigel stood, tall above him now in the pleasantly warm, dim room. “Is the bed nearby?”

Nigel growled, scooping the boy into his strong arms and conveying him to the bed, which thankfully appeared to be of sturdy design.

“Do you even know what couples do upon their marriage bed, you pretty brat?” Nigel could not stop smiling; he laughed again despite his arousal when his husband’s first response to the question was boldly reaching out to try and undo his clothes.

“I know enough. Even the Bible says something about the act of love, you know. Though I think the angels might blush at what we shall become together, Husband.”

“I apologize now, for I will certainly be cursing up a storm tonight,” Nigel said with a groan of bliss at Will’s deft hands quickly finding his shirt and trouser buttons, undoing the suspenders and pushing everything off that he could reach.

The younger man gasped at Nigel’s beautiful, dangerous form when undressed, his skin glowing even golder by firelight, his silvery hair fanning his forehead, eyes aching with need, the quickness of his breath unmistakably animal.

Nigel was so big, and strong, with such muscles, and a few scars that both fascinated and aroused Will further, his fingers eagerly tracing a long one on his side, which looked like claw marks.

“Fuck,” Nigel gasped hoarsely, “When you touch me, my love…angel, I’m going to…I need you so fucking much…”

“Then do with me as you must,” Will said, leaning up and kissing him with teasing, but serious meaning. “Husband.”

That was enough to unleash Nigel’s need entirely, and if the huge bulge in his pants had not excited and frightened Will enough, it was much larger when Nigel flung off the last remaining garment.

Nigel’s cock stood out boldly, thick and beaded with pearly wetness at the head, and Will could not imagine it fitting inside him, yet wanted nothing else, possibly ever again. Since Nigel had spoken to him of the knot, he had thought of it constantly, with feverish need.

Dizzy with lustful joy, Will let Nigel take off all of his lovely wedding clothes, except for his precious, ruby velvet robe. This, Nigel left on, merely loosening the ribbons that had tied it around his husband’s throat. He finished the job of baring Will’s form to his devouring eyes, by slowly peeling each of the boy’s knee-high, thin formal socks down the smooth legs, using his teeth, looking up into his husband’s eyes the whole time.

It left the boy naked against the soft, crimson fabric, a sight so perfect to Nigel’s eyes that he stared, his chest rising and falling quickly, pupils huge with lustful admiration. He dragged one hand sensuously down Will’s body from his long, lovely neck over his smooth chest, down to the flat of his belly, savoring every inch of that pretty, bare skin before finally lowering his lips with a kiss, then several long, lapping licks, on Will’s straining cock.

Will disintegrated with pleasure, as every little act of love which Nigel poured over him felt better than he could believe. He was incredibly sensitive, and even though he had touched himself a little, from time to time, and only when he could steal some time alone to explore matters, Will had never felt this sensitive.

Nigel’s mouth and hands had magical abilities he could not fathom, though he knew this magic was of the purely earthy and human kind, that of exquisite pleasuring which only the most attentive and caring lovers could do.

It was more than that, though Nigel's euphoric licking and sucking of Will's cock, while he held the shivering boy's hips down tight to help him keep from fidgeting, was full of more love and care than Will ever knew. It was his passion, too, that came from his animal side, the two parts of him merging so beautifully.

"Put your legs over my shoulders, darling, there now," Nigel soothed, when Will moaned in complaint that he had stopped sucking. "You're far too delicious for me to be satisfied only tasting some of you, my beauty."

He set about licking at Will's tight, pink entrance, finding the small hole with a grunt of delight before pressing his tongue with broad, elated, wet swipes over it, again and again. Working Will's cock then, with long, tight strokes of his powerful hand, he licked and licked at the sensitive, previously untouched hole while Will writhed and grabbed at the sheets, almost thrashing by the time his husband could ease his tongue inside him a little.

At this, Will's body seized up in a shock of ecstasy such as he could not believe even as it tore through him. Distantly, shaking all over, he heard himself moaning weakly for Nigel to do more, teach him to give Nigel pleasure next, then claim him completely.

Nigel, who looked delirious from making Will come, now attempted a very gentle tutelage to his husband on how to suck his cock, which unfortunately, or in their opinion, quite fortunately became ruined once Will's cherry-red lips, swollen from so many kisses, finally pressed to his enormously hard manhood.

"Oh, fuck, darling, fuck, I –" Nigel had been carefully teaching Will how to take him, and yet he found himself quivering all over, trying with all his might to hold back when the boy wrapped his pretty lips around his aching, dripping erection and moaned in enjoyment.

He knew from Will's big, naughty eyes gazing up at him and batting those dark lashes, that his boy was ready for all of him, and then he let go, thrusting smoothly in and out until Will got used to the immense heat and weight of him in his little mouth.

Will was a fast learner, which made Nigel grow desperate within seconds, thrusting deeper now and gripping his husband's brunette curls tightly. His apology ahead of time seemed insubstantial to cover the curses he had already let fly from the way Will made him feel, and how Will looked, undone with pleasure and happily servicing his new husband.

"Alright, Will, you must stop or – oh, *fuck*! You're so *perfect*, how can you be this perfect?" Nigel groaned as he managed to slide out of Will's mouth.

"That was awfully nice, when you did it to me, and when I did it to you, but you didn't finish," Will smiled, heart thumping even as lazy lust blanketed him along with a fresh burst of mischief. "Why is that?"

Will lay, softly innocent yet deeply entranced by erotic longing, as his husband hovered above him, barely allowing his cock to slide against Will's own. They both moaned loudly, and then Nigel snarled in his ear, "Because I'm going to knot you so deep, and come inside you, my beautiful, mischievous husband. Do you want that?" He bit Will's earlobe and Will cried out blissfully.

“Yes,” Will nodded, clinging to Nigel and whining with yearning, aching delight when his husband found lubricant nearby and used it to prepare his virgin hole.

“Oh, God, *Nigel* – oh, that’s so good, oh, your fingers, your hand, so –”

Will gave himself over entirely to the experience of being speared open by Nigel’s thick, long fingers, and all the while his husband kissed him, pausing occasionally to listen to the wanton, begging words Will said whenever his lips were free.

“Yes,” Nigel hissed once he could easily scissor two fingers into Will, finding his prostate and pressing against it slightly. “Yes, you’re ready, aren’t you. Do you feel that, angel? Right *there*?”

Will trembled, his mouth open in a perfect “o” of shock.

“You do feel it. Well, my fingers are nothing compared to what my knot will make you feel, right…” he thrust against it more solidly, groaning as his cock stiffened. “There…ah…yes, pretty, wicked boy, that’s it, right?”

“*Unnhhhh, Nigel–!”*

“That’s it,” the rugged older man gasped, finding it a few more times with long, deep twists of his fingers, watching Will’s face turn red as he sweated and shook more and more. The sheets would be soaked through in a couple of ways when they were, however temporarily, done.

Will felt like heaven, so smooth and tight, and inside just as velvety-soft as his favorite garment. Nigel, in the long and cynical years, the cold, lonely years of being what he was with no satisfying companion, had never, ever thought he would go to heaven, and yet he was, he was, right then.

“What did I ever do to deserve you, gorgeous boy?” Nigel asked, voice husky with love and erotic tension. “Fuck…you take it so well, so nicely, my perfect little husband–”

Will loved to hear Nigel praising him, and knew Nigel adored hearing his own name cried out in Will’s broken, adoring voice. Both of them made sure to discover, fully realize and repeat those acts that made the other cry out in bliss. It was hard to believe they were only just getting started exploring each other’s bodies, seeing how fearlessly, how relentlessly they enacted their sex, both of them in love with every small detail, only growing more and more excited, arousal rising to shocking new heights.

The warmth of Will, his perfect, soft, pretty boy trembling hard and clenching down on his fingers, almost made Nigel come untouched, but his own willpower held him back. The wolf would take what was his, completely, and remained fiercely determined to do just that.

After wetting them both with more of the lubricant, Nigel lovingly arranged his husband on his back, with the crimson cloak spread out beneath him, a striking contrast to his alabaster skin. He kissed Will all over his face, muttering gruff, worshipful words, all the while lifting

the boy's thighs to frame his hips, then lining his throbbing cock up to the more relaxed, but still virginally tight hole.

"Yes, so brave, and such a good, beautiful, fucking angelic, sweet boy, my husband, yes, Will, now take a deep breath for me…" Kissing Will in hot fervor while they both moaned and Will's hands pressed so tightly to Nigel's sweaty back as to leave bruises, Nigel thrust slowly into his husband, just letting Will get used to the feeling.

Nigel knew the penetration burned, and felt it in the automatic flinch of Will's body beneath him, in the way Will whimpered his name and clamped down on him in every sense.

Will's arms and legs locked tightly around his husband's larger form, and his nails sank into Nigel's skin deeper. Instinctively, his muscles clenched Nigel's cock hard, and they kissed again, harder and deeper, through Will's pain and Nigel's healing of it.

Soothing again, he massaged Will's pert, round ass in his rough hand and framed his face in the other, kissing him, reminding him he was doing so well, amazing, and Nigel loved him so…

Still shaking, but with a new fervor on his lovely face, Will bit his husband's lip and tried to move his own lower body up to meet Nigel's slow, deepening thrusts. The desire, and how Will wanted more despite the difficulty of it at first, unraveled Nigel. He had to make this the best thing Will ever felt, and the thought of it made him giddy, giving his life new meaning.

"Yes–" Will cried out, sweat trickling down his creamy skin as his face flushed even brighter, features strained in happy, accepting discomfort shifting now to complete and utter ecstasy. "Yes! Oh, Nigel, God – *Yes*!"

"Yes, my beauty, like that?" Nigel asked, his hair falling down in his eyes. He was totally torn apart and lost in this as well.

The two of them moved together with obsessive lust, and anyone would think Will just as animalistic as Nigel, so voraciously did he accept every rougher, deeper slam he begged for and received.

Breathless, they rolled around together, finding a perfect harmony as Will learned how to try different positions, letting Nigel grab his hips in a bruising grip and fuck him hard from behind, grunting and spanking. The cloak had come undone and lay beneath them still as a blanket. Nigel would do his very best to clean it later…

"You've been wanting– to – give me a — a *spanking* – all along, hav- h-haven't –you?" Will managed to whimper, every word disrupted by another merciless thrust.

Nigel tugged his hair possessively, grinning through the unbearable pleasure, and then spanked him again. "You're too fucking right, gorgeous. You – ahh, *fuck*, yeah, ohhh – you needed it too, didn't you?"

Will was in no position and no mood to argue the point. The slick, sticky gliding and slamming together of their bodies went on and on, both of them growing exhausted but

refusing to stop, even as they kept asking the other if they needed to.

Nigel knew he would swell very soon and put Will on his side so that they could spoon through it, the most comfortable way to take a long-lasting knot. "Now, angel – *oh, God, yes,* soon, soon, hold on tight and let it happen, alright? I have you. I'm going to have you, more than anyone else could, and – oh, *God,* gorgeous, deeper, *so deep*. Ready?"

Will nodded, trembling but trusting, and clung to his husband's arm where it was wrapped around his middle. Nigel caressed him lovingly on his chest and stomach, but he also stroked Will expertly, having learned all of his boy's favorite ways to be touched, and managed to make his husband come again with a ragged, frightened, awestruck gasp, right as his knot finally swelled. He came, his seed spurting powerfully, over and over into Will, and then it was fully happening – to their mutual, overwhelming delight.

"*Oh..the way it feels*…you're so…big and…I feel *fuller* than…" Will's cries were nonstop, even as Nigel soothed him with large, comforting hands, feeling him all over, gliding down smooth skin now covered in bite marks and scratches, which he had his share of, too.

Nigel felt Will's stomach, where the nudging press of his cock could be felt externally, and if he could have come again just from that, he would have.

"I'm locked inside you now, lovely boy. Just breathe. It will be a while, *breathe now*, I love you and you're mine. Feel how much you're *mine*."

Will gave his little whimpering "yes" repeatedly, kissing his husband at a crooked but happy angle over his shoulder, tangling their legs, curling up to feel every thick, huge inch trapped in his tight walls, perhaps for hours to come. He was sore and aching, and already never wanted this to end. To be so close to Nigel, to have him this deep and get to keep it, on and on!

Without realizing it, Will drifted off to a profound sleep with Nigel still knotting him, still holding him tight and moaning his own disbelieving cries of pleasure in this ultimate claiming. When he woke, nothing had changed, and Nigel gave his sleepy, confused husband a kiss on his lips.

"*Still*?" Will asked, not complaining, merely overwhelmed in every other way, all of the good ways.

"Mmm. Still, my perfect, beautiful Little Red Riding Hood. It will be over soon. I'll make you breakfast like you deserve. Um." He paused, shivering at the long-lasting pleasure of filling Will to the brim. "Mmm. I have bread, and…I think some berries…I can fetch water, of course, there's the well near here, and if you want juice, I can make that. Do you like wine, angel?"

"In the morning?" Will laughed. "I don't know, actually, if I like it at any time. I shall try it with you in the evening, perhaps. Or you can pour it all over me and lick it up."

"*Will*," Nigel groaned, "Already? You're fucking insatiable, darling, you are unreal. But here you are."

“Here I am.” Will could barely move, and he planned to gobble up that breakfast to the last bite, he’d used up so much of himself, given it all on his marriage bed.

He felt…very triumphant and accomplished, and Nigel was obviously proud, as well. There was time, all the time in the world, for Nigel to unfurl the tale of how he became a wolf, and whether Will might one day become the same, but no need to say much more at present, aside from what Will felt most.

“Here I am, my husband,” Will nodded, kissing Nigel’s hand and blushing, pleased beyond measure. “And here I shall remain, with you, always.”

End Notes

Part 2: There will be a sequel, featuring Will and Nigel's anniversary night one year later! Will asks for his husband to hunt him in the woods, and for him to bite Will once he catches him, turning him to a wolf as well...👀. Already written and coming soon! 🐺🌹

story playlist: https://open.spotify.com/playlist/3cTAiCNlpYg2MJLRTRPlLL?si=189acc0194c04f79

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